



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA HONORS DISASTER SURVIVORS WHO HELPED COMMUNITIES RECOVER

WASHINGTON – A small business owner, a volunteer and a public official were recognized for their post-disaster recovery efforts earlier today during the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Small Business Week celebration.

The Phoenix Awards were presented to Dalph McNeil, owner of Brookville (Pa.) Mining Equipment Corporation, Marjorie Kesler of Gainesville, Ga., and Mayor Linda Wallin of Comfrey, Minn. at the Phoenix Awards breakfast in Washington, D.C. This is the second time in the 36-year history of Small Business Week, which runs from May 23 to May 28th, that disaster survivors are being honored.

In July 1996, a flash flood in Brookville, Pa., tore down a 30-foot section of a wall in Dalph McNeil's manufacturing plant, leaving tons of mud and destroying \$1.6 million worth of inventory and machinery. McNeil applied for an SBA disaster loan, and rebuilt a new, larger facility away from the flood plain.

After deadly tornados destroyed homes in Clermont, Ga. last February, Marjorie Kesler organized a group of volunteers to gather and distribute food, clothing, and other relief supplies to disaster victims. Kesler and her crew worked 12-hour days, doing everything from making sure people had water, to helping rebuild some homes.

Comfrey, Minn. was nearly destroyed when tornadoes hit last March. The small town of 427 was in danger of dying. Mayor Linda Wallin quickly established a command center and held meetings to organize relief and rebuilding efforts. She worked to secure funds for the reconstruction of a civic center, a new library and an elementary school.

While they come from diverse backgrounds, the 1999 Phoenix Award winners share certain traits—confidence, optimism, and love of community—that allowed them to work tirelessly to make sure their neighbors were able to surmount the obstacles, rebuild their lives, and come back stronger.

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The SBA makes disaster loans to homeowners, renters and non-farm businesses of all sizes. Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 to repair or replace damaged real estate. Individuals may borrow up to \$40,000 to cover losses to personal property. An additional 20 percent may be added to the disaster loan to cover mitigation measures that can include the cost of building a “safe room” in the home. Safe rooms can provide protection against winds of up to 250 miles per hour and projectiles travelling at 100 miles an hour.

Non-farm businesses and nonprofit organizations of any size may apply for up to \$1.5 million to repair or replace business assets. Small businesses that suffer economic losses may apply for a working capital loan of up to \$1.5 million, even if the property is not physically damaged. To find out more about SBA’s disaster assistance program, visit the Web site at <http://www.sba.gov/disaster>.

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*For more information on Small Business Week and a complete list of award winners, visit the SBA’s Small Business Week Web site at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov>. Additional information about SBA programs and services is available at SBA’s Web site: <http://www.sba.gov>. Or call the **SBA Answer Desk** at **1-800-U-ASK- SBA**.*

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